MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD IN WASHINGTON, D. C., JUNE 4, 1920.

The eighth meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1920 was held in its office at 1729 New York Avenue, northwest, Washington, D. C., Friday, June 4, 1920.

The following members were present:

Mr. Moore, Chairman;
Mr. Wm. Mitchell Kendall;
Mr. Pope;
Mr. Greenleaf;
Mr. Fraser;

also Colonel C. S. Ridley, Secretary and Executive Officer.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PRECEDING MEETING: The minutes of the preceding meeting held in Washington, D. C., May 7, 1920, were approved.

2. APPOINTMENT OF A VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION: Mr. Charles A. Platt was elected Vice-Chairman of the Commission to succeed Mr. Herbert Adams whose term of office had expired.

3. PROMOTION OF THE CLERK TO THE COMMISSION: The Commission authorized and directed the promotion and appointment of Mr. H. P. Caemmerer, Clerk to the Commission, from $1,800 to $2,500 per annum, to take effect July 1, 1920, and directed the change in the designation of the position from Clerk to the Commission to Assistant to the Secretary.

4. PEARY MEMORIAL: The Commission expressed the desire at the meeting on May 7th to secure if possible additional space for a memorial to Admiral Peary, and request therefor was made of the Quartermaster General, who granted an increase so that the lot will be double the original size, or almost thirty

feet square. (Exhibit A). The Commission recommended that steps be taken to secure suitable landscape design for the area and to confer with the designer regarding the memorial.

5. JEANNE D'ARC MEMORIAL: Colonel Ridley reported that on May 26th Madame Polifeme called regarding the proposed memorial statue of Jeanne d'Arc which the Societe des Femmes de France à New York propose to erect in the District of Columbia. The statue is to be a replica of the statue in front of Rheims Cathedral, a master-piece of Dubois. The statue is now being completed in Paris, and it was the desire of Madame Polifeme to have bills introduced in Congress permitting its erection in Washington. The necessary arrangements were made and an endorsement from the French Ambassador was secured, whereupon the following Joint Resolution was introduced in the Senate by Senator Brandegee and by Representative Pell in the House of Representatives:

> "Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Chief of Engineers, United States Army, be, and he is hereby authorized and directed to grant the Societe des Femmes de France à New York permission to erect on public grounds of the United States in the City of Washington, District of Columbia, other than those of the Capitol, the Library of Congress, and the White House, a copy of the statue of Jeanne d'Arc by Paul Dubois: Provided, That the site chosen and the design of the pedestal shall be approved by the National Commission of Fine Arts, and that the United States shall be put to no expense in or by the erection of the said memorial."

Madame Polifeme recommended placing the statue on the opposite side of Seventeenth Street facing Continental Hall, which the Commission took under advisement in connection with other locations, withholding definite action in the matter of site until a future meeting.

6. WORLD WAR SECTION, ARLINGTON CEMETERY: In view of the movement under way by the War Department to return the remains of our soldiers of the World War

to this country, and the report that many of these will be buried at Arlington, the Commission recommended that the area which is to be known as the "World War Section" (to be located in the southwest part of Arlington) be made the subject of study for landscape treatment. Also that if possible the adjoining land running south of Arlington be secured by the War Department as additional grounds for the Cemetery.

7. MAINE MEMORIAL COIN: Under date of May 14th the Commission received the following letter from the Secretary of the Treasury:

> "I am enclosing, herewith, a sketch of the design for the fifty-cent piece to be issued in commemoration of the one-hundredth anniversary of the admission of the State of Maine to the Union, the coinage of which was approved by the Act of May 10, 1920.
>
> The design was submitted by the Honorable John A. Peters, in behalf of the officials having charge of the Maine Centennial.
>
> This sketch is submitted for your opinion as to the merits of the design for a coin and I shall appreciate your early attention, as the Department is being urged to expedite the execution of the coinage."

The Commission referred the matter to the sculptor member of the Commission, Mr. Fraser, and immediate action being required a telegraphic reply was received from him as follows:

> "Mistake to accept design for coin in form of drawing. Model should be made by medallic sculptor of note. Our coins have reached high grade of perfection because this method is used. Design for proposed coin very ordinary. Should not be used, Mr. Adams concurs."

The Secretary of the Treasury was advised accordingly. (Exhibit B).

Mr. Fraser reported that in the meantime he had been in conference with a committee from Maine regarding this matter with the result that before taking further action a model of the proposed coin will be made with a view to securing

a coin of such design as will be acceptable as a memorial.

8. WHOLESALE TERMINAL, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: Mr. Salvatore Scalco, President of the National Fruit Company, appeared before the Commission and stated that in accordance with suggestions made at the meeting of the Commission on May 7th he called on Colonel Kutz, the Engineer Commissioner, for a conference regarding the proposed erection of a wholesale terminal. Mr. Scalco reported the result of his conference by letter to the Commission as follows:

> "A few days after I visited you, I had the pleasure of meeting in conference two of the district commissioners, Col. Kutz, and Mr. Brownlow. They have shown considerable interest in my proposal for a terminal market, and seem to be heartily in favor of it.
>
> I understand that at some future date, the Fine Art Commission intends to make a boulevard along the southwest section of the city in the vicinity of Water Street yard, which is bounded by 12th and 14th streets, Maryland Ave., and Water Street southwest. This yard at present is being used by the Pennsylvania Railroad System.
>
> I would like to say, that our plans for a terminal market, would in no way interfere with the commission's plan for beautifying this section of the city. On the contrary, our plans were to erect a neat appearing building surrounded by flowers and trees. This building would not only beautify this section, but food supplies could be handled here at a saving of 25% to the people of Washington.
>
> About 90% of the merchants on 9th, 10th, "B" and "C" streets have signed an agreement to occupy part of the proposed building. In this event, I feel sure that the government officials could purchase property in this section at their own figure, providing of course, that these merchants did move their business.
>
> Last week I received a communication from the Southern Railway, in which they expressed their willingness to sell their property in this section. Negotiations are now under way for the purchase of same. Several local banks have also expressed a willingness to advance loans for this project. There is no doubt but that the section which I have mentioned is the ideal locality for a terminal market, and I earnestly hope that you gentlemen will approve of this plan."

Mr. Scalco advised that he intended to see officials of the Southern Railway Company during the week with a view to coming to an agreement on the purchase of the land, and that he would report further developments of the project

for consideration at a future meeting.

9. FARRAGUT MEMORIAL WINDOW: The Commission approved the Farragut Memorial Window made by Gorham Company of New York, which has been set in place in the Naval Academy at Annapolis, satisfactory to the Naval Academy Graduates Association.

10. SPACE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT: Mr. George O. Von Nerta, representing a committee appointed by the Secretary of the Treasury, to inquire into space requirements of various Bureaus of the Department, appeared before the Commission and submitted a plot plan, part of the City of Washington, accompanying a report of the Committee on Space Requirements, June, 1920, outlining certain projects proposed by the Treasury Department to secure the increased space required by that Department.

It was the opinion of the Commission that the projects for all the Departments should be considered at the same time, and that it was not advisable for any one Department to work independently of the others. The Commission is of the opinion that the general building plan reported to Congress by the Public Buildings Commission in Senate Document No. 155, 65th Congress, 2d Session, be adhered to excepting in those cases where a restudy shall make changes advisable.

In regard to the specific project proposed by the Treasury Department the Commission reached the following conclusions:

(a) The safe-room for distinctive papers: - This project is purely a departmental matter. The proposed building lies within the lines of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, and does not relate to the plan of Washington.

(b) Proposed site of the central heating, lighting and power building: - The Commission is opposed to the use of the space at the west end of Water Street for building purposes. They believe the building should be located elsewhere and that Water Street should be swung around to make a connection with East

Potomac Park.

(c) Possible location for Bureau Power House: This location is desirable provided the chimneys can be so disposed of as to not make offensive features.

(d) Extension to Liberty Loan Building: The Commission is of the opinion that the present building should not be extended until satisfactory arrangements are made for the carrying through of Fifteenth Street. The proposed extension makes too narrow a throat in the connection between Potomac Park and East Potomac Park.

(e) Extension to the Arlington Building: The Commission is of the opinion that no extension should be made to the Arlington Building until satisfactory arrangements for the frontage on H Street between Vermont Avenue and Connecticut Avenue shall have been made. The Arlington Building is an eye-sore and pains should be taken to mitigate instead of increasing those disagreeable features.

(f) Extension of the Treasury Annex along Madison Place to H Street: This is in all respects desirable and should be carried out in accordance with the plans already made.

(g) New Department Building forming an annex to the Treasury: The site proposed for this building by Mr. Von Herta has already been fixed by legislation of Congress for the Department of Justice, and the Commission knows of no reason why this legislation should not be carried out.

The Treasury Department is to be advised accordingly.

11. NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDEN: Mr. Moore reported that on May 21st at the call of Senator Brandegee, Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Library, a hearing took place in the room of the Committee at the Capitol. The hearing was

of national importance, and every effort was made to have the Commission represented by leading men of the United States to testify. Accordingly there were present, Dr. N. L. Britton, Director-in-Chief of the New York Botanic Garden; Dr. C. S. Gager, Director of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden; Mr. Frederick Law Olmsted, former member of the Park Commission Plan of 1901 and of the Commission of Fine Arts, and President of the Society of Landscape Architects of America; Brigadier-General W. W. Harts, former Secretary and Executive Officer of the Commission of Fine Arts; and Messrs. Coville, Swingle and Fairchild, expert scientists of the Department of Agriculture. In addition Colonel Ridley reported the receipt of letters of regret from Honorable Edwin T. Meredith, Secretary of Agriculture; Dr. George T. Moore, Director of the Missouri Botanical Garden; and Mr. J. Horace McFarland, President of the American Civic Association and the Rose Growers Association.

Mr. Hess, Superintendent of the existing Botanic Garden at the foot of the Capitol, testified to the inadequacy of the existing area of the garden, and expressed himself in favor of the establishment of a National Botanic Garden at Mount Hamilton. Senator Brandegee ordered, with the consent of the Committee, the printing of the Botanic Garden Report of the Commission of Fine Arts, and under date of June 2, 1920, introduced a bill in the United States Senate (S. 4485) for the changing of the taking line of the Anacostia Reclamation project so as to include the Mount Hamilton area (approximately 400 acres), for a National Botanic Garden.

12. THE MALL: In view of the developments for the relocation of the Botanic Garden the Commission gave consideration to the plan for the Mall which would ultimately see the fulfillment of the L'Enfant Plan of 1792 and of the Park Commission Plan of 1901, for the opening of the entire Mall vista from the Capitol

to the Lincoln Memorial. Attention was called to the legislation in the current Sundry Civil Bill in which Congress has ordered part of the fence in the vicinity of the Grant Memorial to be taken down. It was reported further that the architects of the Meade Memorial desire to begin work on the soundings for the Memorial, and that this in time would be apt to require parts of the fence in the vicinity of that Memorial to be taken down. The plea of Superintendent Hess that the fence is necessary to protect the garden from marauders, the Commission considered unwarranted since the garden is not any more beautiful than existing public gardens in Boston, New York, Chicago, and other large cities which are entirely open to the public. A discussion followed as to whether the Mall as it would extend from the Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial for fully two miles should be given a formal or informal treatment. The informal treatment was considered preferable, and as being in accordance with the Park Commission Plan of 1901. The question of grades, curving, roadways, and walks was also given attention. As to the grades Mr. Greenleaf stated that there is no great diversity of grades in the Mall, and therefore a uniform system of grades could be adopted; that these grades when adopted should be adhered to. It was suggested that consideration be given the subject and that plans for the Mall be examined for further attention at a meeting in the near future.

13. RESERVATION 312-A: A revised plan was presented placing the drinking fountain on the intersection of the axes of the diagonal walks and thereby coinciding with the axial relation of this reservation to the radius of Grant Circle. The diagonal walk to be of cement, roughened surface, six feet wide, with an appropriate sanitary drinking fountain at the intersection of the center lines of the walks. The border as designed consisted of mixed deciduous and evergreen planting, while the entrance steps were to be constructed of cement, roughened,

with five inch riser and fifteen inch tread.

The walk on the main axis was shown as constructed of flag stones, with irregular outlines, set with their surfaces flush with the ground surface.

This plan was approved.

14. FARRAGUT SQUARE: A revised plan was presented showing the addition of Taxus cuspidata in combination with Pinus mugho about the oval surrounding the statue. The hedge on the grass panel was to be of California privet three feet wide by two and one-half feet high, with formal clipped outline and intercepted at places with specimen Box and English yew as shown on plan. Further, sanitary drinking fountains were shown, each backed up by a single bench and appropriate shrubbery.

Further, seats were shown on the outside of each walk bordering the grass panel.

This plan was approved.

15. MCPHERSON SQUARE: A revised plan was presented showing a formal turf panel bordered by Ligustrum ovalifolium hedge, to be kept clipped to eighteen inches in height and two and one-half feet in width, with four suitable specimen evergreen plants in each half panel as shown. Seats were shown on the outside of the walk bordering the turf panel. The walks on plan were to be of roughened cement to avoid slipping while the area immediately around the monument area and drinking fountain were to be of terrazzo pavement. The walks bounding the turf panel were to be ten feet in width, while the diagonal walk was to be fourteen feet in width to accommodate the necessary pedestrian traffic. The walks as designed paralleling the turf panel afford a continuation of their respective center lines with those on each side of Vermont Avenue.

The plan was approved.

16. RESERVATION 34: Plan was not approved as the present planting was

deemed sufficient except the suggestion that several trees be added to each side of the walk leading to Ninth Street. No hedge was recommended.

17. PRELIMINARY GRADING PLAN FOR FREER ART GALLERY: A plan showing proposed walk and road entrance from Twelfth Street to the entrance of the building proper and leading towards the Smithsonian Institution was presented; also a section of the thirty-five foot drive with ten foot grass parking area between the curb and the fifteen foot sidewalk. This cross section was designed after the sketch study plan of Messrs. Olmsted and Punchard. After considerable discussion it was felt by Mr. Greenleaf that the informal integral curb and gutter would best be considered at greater detail inasmuch as this arrangement had a dangerous tendency, on certain grades, to "bulge out", in a curve rather than preserve the formal lines so much desired in accordance with the Mall plan. Restudy and resubmission was advised. Regarding the roads and walks proposed south of the Smithsonian Institution it was felt that the present cinder road had best stop at a suitably convenient point so as not to foster heavy through traffic past the Freer Art Gallery on the north entrance of the latter. It was advised that the thirty-five foot road be carried past the last named building in accordance with the Mall plan, and to connect with the informal drive leading northwest of the Smithsonian Institution. Further that the formal thirty-five foot road should stop in the near vicinity of the terminus of the existing California privet hedge, at which point a suitable walk should connect with the sidewalks at the intersection of Tenth and B Streets, southwest. Restudy and resubmission was advised.

With the exception of the hour for luncheon the Commission was in session continuously during the day, adjourning at 6:15 p.m.

Approved:

C O P Y

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL
OF THE ARMY,
Washington

May 19, 1920.

My dear Madam:

In reply to your letter of the 18th instant, requesting an enlargement of the lot in Arlington National Cemetery in which the late Admiral Peary is interred, I take great pleasure in granting your request and have instructed the Depot Officer to increase the size to 30 x 30 feet.

This will enable you, I trust, to erect a Memorial and approach thereto more worthy of the achievements of your distinguished husband, in accordance with your expressed desire.

Believe me,

Very truly yours,

H. L. Rogers,

Quartermaster General of the Army.

Mrs. Robert E. Peary,
1831 Wyoming Avenue,
Washington, D. C.

Copy for
Honorable Charles Moore,
Chairman, Commission of Fine Arts,
Lemon Bldg., Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT A.

C O P Y

May 27, 1920.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The design for the coin commemorating the one-hundredth anniversary of the admission of the State of Maine to the Union as submitted to the Commission of Fine Arts would result in a coin far below the standard set by the new fifty-cent piece. The design proposed is positively bad, and would bring humiliation to the people of Maine, if it should be executed. The Treasury Department and the Mint also would be made to suffer criticisms from the people who have now been aroused to a feeling and demand for an artistic coinage.

Experience proves that there is only one way in which to get a satisfactory design for a coin, - the method followed in the case of the new coinage. A model should be made by a medallic sculptor of known excellence. It is a mistake to pass upon a design for a coin on the basis of a drawing. The drawing may show the intrinsic badness of a design as does the drawing submitted; but only a model will show defects not disclosed by the drawing. Our new silver coinage has reached a high grade of perfection because it was designed by competent men. We should not return to the low standards which have formerly prevailed. This is especially true in the present instance, where the coin goes ultimately to collectors, and becomes a permanent memorial of the State of Maine.

Very respectfully, yours,

(signed) Charles Moore

Chairman.

Hon. David F. Houston,

Secretary of the Treasury.

EXHIBIT B.